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Mattie Edwards Hewitt

A TAILOR GOWN IN NAVY TRICOT, DOVE-GREY GEORGETTE TURBAN  
INTERIOR SETTING BY AGNES FOSTER WRIGHT

# The Story of Woman's Head-dress

BY JANET DUER

*"A beautiful woman's head is one which makes one dream in a confused manner,  
half pleasure and half sadness."* Charles Baudelaire.

PROMPTED by a natural vanity and an innate love of admiration, woman, throughout the ages and in all climes, have appreciated the value of becoming head adornment, as a means of enhancing their beauty. Varying with the conditions of the times and period in which she lived, she has indulged her fancy in a variety of head ornamentation with always the same desire in mind—to make herself as attractive as possible.

With the Assyrian and Egyptian women the head decoration became an elaborate head-dress of gold and jewels, or of the wings of birds or the lotus flower. With the women of the East, such as in Arabia, Persia and India, soft, filmy veils were worn that entirely covered the hair, yet had their touch of coquetry in the opening across the face.

Exquisite colorings to delight the eye were changed at will by the Indian woman, for she could, as she has done for centuries, re-dye her veils whenever she wished with the vegetable dyes always at her command. This she can even do to-day. A walk through her garden, among her flowers, is all she needs as inspiration for color or design. She then dips the filmy tissue, with her own dexterous fingers, until she produces the colors to her liking, carried out in solid tones or in a carefully repeated pattern so skilful is she in this art.

In the Orient, the native dress of the Chinese and Japanese women calls for head-dresses more or less elaborate, depending upon the occasion, of real or artificial flowers, beads, silk tassels and pieces of carved jade or ivory. The Greek and Roman women affected gold filets and bandeaux without flowers and the hair was so dressed as to form the

more important part of the head decoration. But the charm of head ornamentation has always prevailed and its subtleties appreciated by women of all periods. The spirit which inspires the young debutante of today to put a flower in her hair as an added charm, is the same instinct which prompted the Spanish beauties of old coily to wear a rose close to the ear or to fill in the great curved shell comb, which held the mantilla.

As the centuries advanced, the women of the Middle Ages adopted elaborate head coverings, which really were the forerunners of the hat. Many of these were cornucopia in shape or suggested what is familiarly known as the "fool's cap"—worn well back on the head and with a flowing well attached to the point. A veil was also draped under the chin to cover the throat.

Somewhat later, in the Sixteenth century, great ruffs were worn and with these, the head-dresses became correspondingly smaller, consisting of mere three-cornered caps of jeweled-trimmed velvet or gold net. This same head-dress was affected with the high Elizabethian collars, or a small turban, much ornamented with jewels and tiny ostrich feathers.

The Seventeenth century brought the introduction of the large-feather-trimmed hat, turned well up on the side, which was worn by both men and women alike. But in the Eighteenth century, women's head-dress reached the height of its elaboration. Powdered wigs with many puffs and curls called for large, broad-brimmed felt hats and that these might be in proportion with the size of the head, they were bedecked with great ostrich plumes and long flowing ribbon ends that



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EVENING GOWN OF BLACK AND GOLD BROCADE TRIMMED WITH OSTRICH FEATHERS  
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have become familiar to us through the portraits by the great English painters of the period.

Gainsborough, for example, favored a hat of this type for his subjects to such an extent that it became known by his name. The expressive outline of a broad, drooping brim on a hat such as this is exceedingly attractive.

In France, where the study of coiffures and millinery became a salient feature of a woman's toilet, the most wonderful

combinations of feathers, laces and flowers were arranged to supplement the beauty of the skillfully dressed wig and the face beneath.

Life at court encouraged the expenditures of time and outlay on these ornate head-dresses, which consisted, oddly enough, considering the extravagances of these times, more of flowers and feathers than of jewels. As a contrast to the large, broad-brimmed hat, the coquetry of the Frenchwoman found another



AN EVENING GOWN OF OYSTER WHITE SATIN  
CHAIR DESIGNED BY AGNES FOSTER WRIGHT

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expression in the tiny black velvet hat, sometimes tri-cornered, encircled with a garland of pink roses, but this was worn at a saucy angle more as an effective head decoration than for protection as a hat.

As the century waned, a decided reaction affected the outline of the hat, and as the Nineteenth century advanced the brims began to droop and form themselves into the poke. From this, somewhat later, the bonnet was evolved.

The coiffures also, with the classic tendency of the fashions of the Empire, became modified. Wigs disappeared and flowers and feathers gave way to Grecian head-dresses and to jeweled coronets, filets and bandeaux. From 1810 on the poke changed to many forms and sizes, but always kept to its original purpose of covering the head and framing the face, with an inner trimming of flowers and lace to soften the otherwise trying outline.

The Victorian period, following, re-introduced the curved brim hat and the use of ostrich feathers, but the fashions, which succeeded, until those of recent date, lost the beauty of their predecessors and became grotesque, over-trimmed and awkward.

Not so the hat of the present day, however, which is the outcome of careful study and a fine sense of the importance of simple outline. Broad, drooping brims possibly prevail in preference to the small close-fitting turbans, because of their flattering becomingness to almost any woman, but no one can deny the desirability of the small hat, with its many practical uses. Motoring alone has marked it as its own and has tempered its severity in the latest importations, with dainty mesh veils that are attached to the hat and hang well down over the face and shoulders.

Another Paris hat showing the French facility to assimilate the ideas and fashion of other people, is a bewitching adaptation of the Dutch cap with a high, folded black silk crown and a wired fitted black lace brim. This extends well out at

either side in long ears or points and is short across the front, like a cap. Its only trimming is a narrow ribbon band about the crown tied in a simple flat bow at the front.

Whatever the size or shape of the hat, as it is worn by women today, there is one unalterable rule governing its selection—that it shall fit well down upon the head and that it shall show as little forehead as possible. Why is this, you ask—well, if for no other reason, it accentuates the expression of the eyes and does away with the effect of flightiness that was created by the hats of some twenty years ago that were worn perched up high upon the head. In other words, it has been found to be the most becoming angle and so the edict has gone forth.

In the matter of brims, they can be broad and drooping and of one width around the hat or somewhat narrower across the front, or they can have a decidedly broader right side, which carries the curved line gracefully across the face into a becoming droop over the right shoulder. These are trimmed in a variety of ways, with just a flat black velvet bow tied around the crown and stretching out across the deep side of the brim, such as on a sheer black horsehair hat. Another model, intended for a youthful face, of the same outline, is made of a succession of tiny white organdie ruffles and finely pleated white and dark blue polka dotted ribbon, with merely a narrow band of the ribbon tied around the crown, forming a bow at the right side.

Flowers have again found favor. Having been used in the greatest profusion, for many years, they suddenly disappeared, almost entirely, and were only seen in an occasional bud peeping timidly out of other trimming. The broad-brimmed hat has revived their necessity, fortunately, and so they again appear in all their old-time glory, in wreaths and clusters and the most exquisite colorings, vieing with ostrich feathers, in their various new forms, in popularity.





Mattie Edwards Hewitt

A BEWITCHING ADAPTATION IN BLACK OF THE DUTCH CAP  
 IVY STAND DESIGNED BY AGNES FOSTER WRIGHT

In the selection of colors in hats, black has an undeniable preference, for aside from its economic advantages, that adapts it to practically all uses, it gives a certain balance to the head. This should not influence the blue-eyed woman, whose most flattering color will be found among the shades of blue that most nearly approach the color of her eyes, for it is a woman's privilege to select in hats what suits her best as an individual that she may make it her crowning beauty.

Never before, perhaps, has the selection of hats been made with more direct attention to suitability of the hat to the wearer. This does not mean that definite styles in hats have given way to a riot of confusion in the matter of forms. No masculine mind will perhaps quite comprehend this. To a man a hundred different hats will appear only as a hun-

dred different forms, but to a woman any hat out of a thousand would carry in its design indications that would immediately lead her to discover whether or not the hat shown was a hat of the season. Such are the mysterious powers of discernment of women. Some little touch, some little turn, some distinguishing fabric,—all these serve as indices for feminine alertness, to call to her aid in style determination. Surely never before has woman's head-dress been more charmingly devised, more certainly fitted to the display of the individual charm. Whosoever remembers the blighting effect of the pestilence of the dutch bonnets in vogue several decades ago, dumpy little affairs, all looking alike, for all the world is interesting as a row of hemlets, rejoices that such times are past, that the art of the head-dress is recognized as an art and not as a mere utility.